



**Texas House of Representatives Committee on Higher Education  
Request for Information Regarding COVID-19 Pandemic**

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**Are institutions of higher education ensuring the health and safety of students, faculty and staff during the 2020 Fall Semester? When applicable, please speak directly to classroom and lab settings, dormitories and dining halls.**

The University of Texas at Tyler takes seriously the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The safety of our campus community is always our first priority. In May 2020, UT Tyler convened the Reboot UT Tyler Task Force with the charge to develop recommendations to return to normal operations in Fall 2020 while balancing our healthcare needs. The Reboot Task Force was comprised of faculty, staff, and students, who relied on the most current information and guidelines from scientists and medical professionals, as well as the expertise of our own faculty to develop these recommendations.

UT Tyler's full procedures document can be found [here](#).

Specific procedures related to classroom and lab settings are:

- Classroom occupancy will reflect CDC physical distancing recommendations. When recommended physical distancing is not possible, the use of hybrid courses offering a face-to-face for all students, with students attending at a rate of 33.3 percent/33.3 percent/33.3 percent for Monday-Wednesday-Friday (MWF) courses and 50 percent/50 percent for Tuesday-Thursday (TTh) courses, with synchronous learning through Zoom or other recorded technologies offered to the remaining 66.6 percent (MWF) or 50 percent (TTh) of the class for each day.
- In courses with multiple sections, at least one section will be offered online for immunocompromised students and students whose households face other health challenges. More than one online section may be offered at faculty and departmental discretion in a collaborative way that balances student needs with faculty and student health concerns.
- In classrooms where physical distancing is not feasible for pedagogical purposes, (i.e. team-based active learning, simulation labs, skills labs), the use of personal protective equipment and physical barriers will be required.
- In classrooms where physical distancing is not feasible even at 33 percent due to furniture layout, the use of personal protective equipment and physical barriers will be required.
- Disinfectant wipes are available in all classrooms for students to use upon entry.

Specific procedures related to dormitories and dining halls are:

- Residents are not allowed to have guests in their rooms.
- Frequent cleaning of public areas, including regular sanitizing of elevator buttons, door handles, etc. will be required.
- Students will be responsible for maintenance of their own spaces.
  - Standards will be increased for student self-maintenance of their personal living environment.
  - Resident Assistants (RAs) will conduct monthly health and safety checks of occupied rooms/apartments.
  - There will be more focus on health/cleanliness when checking rooms/apartments.
- Face coverings and gloves will be provided for any staff needing to enter student spaces.
- Roommate agreements will be required that include cleaning schedules and responsibilities.
- Educational outreach on self-care and care for others will be increased.
- Residents will leave the immediate area (go to another room or leave the unit) when standard maintenance/work orders are being completed.
- Disinfecting supplies/equipment will be provided to each residential unit.
- Student-staff interactions will be limited (fewer numbers and non-shared spaces for essential personnel only).
- Staff will increase sanitization of all public areas.
- Food service will operate following CDC guidelines and will include grab & go, delivery and remote food distribution locations throughout campus.
  - Queuing will be implemented to control flow and to promote social distancing.
  - Indoor seating capacity will be limited to current Governor Executive Order standards.
  - Personnel will follow CDC guidelines related to the health and safety of employees and food handling protocols.
- Outdoor furniture will be relocated, and new outdoor furniture will be purchased to provide students, faculty and staff additional seating for dining and socializing based on CDC-spacing guidelines.

**What plans are in place for on-campus COVID-19 testing? Do institutions have the capacity to provide testing on campus, both in terms of available supplies and labs to process tests?**

UT Tyler is currently operating an on-site testing center through an all-inclusive contract with Advanta Laboratory. Students, faculty, and staff who are identified through our internal contact tracing program are sent for testing as needed.

The on-site center can accommodate drive-up and walk-in testing and is currently open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Advanta provides tests, testing personnel, an administrative assistant for check-in and insurance verification, and transport of samples to the lab for analysis. Participating individuals sign a waiver releasing their results directly to the UT Tyler Contact Tracing Team to immediately identify further tracing needs.

The test being used is a nasopharyngeal swab that is processed through PCR testing for antigen detection. Current turnaround time is 24-72 hours depending on demand. At this time, with this contract UT Tyler has the capacity to provide the number of tests needed, and staffing of the testing center is on an as-needed basis that can be increased based on demand.

**If applicable, what are plans for collegiate athletics this Fall? How will student athletes be kept safe? If fans will be permitted to attend events, how will fans be kept safe?**

UT Tyler will compete in tennis, cross country, and golf this fall. All other sports have been postponed. All NCAA and Lone Star Conference safety protocols will be enforced, including extensive testing procedures.

Fan safety will reflect the following procedures:

- Spectators must check in at a singular point of entry and provide information for contact tracing purposes.
- Marked seating sections will be created reflecting current physical distancing recommendations. Ushers will assist spectators and monitor sections.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be available throughout the venue.
- Restrooms and high touch areas will be disinfected frequently.
- Digital game programs will be accessible via QR code.

**What do projected enrollment figures and formula funding look like to institutions for this school year?**

UT Tyler is expecting our largest undergraduate enrollment in history. We are currently on track to welcome our largest first-time-in-college (FTIC) freshmen class, one of our largest transfer classes, and achieving our second-highest retention rate. If these trends hold through Census date, we would expect to maintain or improve formula funding levels.

**Has there been a noticeable impact on staff or faculty retention with regard to concerns about the pandemic?**

UT Tyler has seen no noticeable impact on staff or faculty retention. So far, we have been able to work with individuals to accommodate acceptable working arrangements.

**How have state and federal COVID-related funds already impacted budgets?**

UT Tyler greatly appreciates the efforts of the President, Congress, Governor, and Legislature to make funds available to assist institutions and students during the pandemic. These funds are helping to alleviate significant increases in operating costs as well as decreases in revenue as a result of COVID-19. Thus far, UT Tyler has dedicated state and federal COVID-related funds in the following ways.

CARES Funds have been distributed in the following ways:

- \$2,597,305: Emergency aid granted to 1,401 students, with an average award of \$1,854
- \$1,375,000: Reimbursed to students for unused Spring 2020 housing, meal plans and parking fees
- \$200,000: Invested in classroom technology to better serve students in online classes

GEER Funds have the following planned distributions:

- \$547,172: Texas Grants to 91 eligible students (estimated award of \$6,000 per student per academic year)

- \$529,371: Emergency Educational Grants to roughly 264 eligible students (estimated award of \$2,000 per student for the Fall 2020 semester).

These funds have been very beneficial, especially to our students during this challenging time; however, they have not made our institutions whole financially. UT Tyler still has significant additional operating costs in response to COVID-19 as well as lost revenue primarily from our Herrington Patriot Center (recreation center), R. Don Cowan Fine & Performing Arts Center, and parking fees.

**Does your institution have a public, online dashboard for the reporting of positive COVID-19 cases which is updated daily? If so, what is the link to the dashboard?**

UT Tyler is currently in the process of developing an online dashboard. It will be located on our current site related to the institution's COVID-19 response: <https://www.uttyler.edu/coronavirus/>.